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HARRY FOSTER'S RULES

FOR THE YOUNG



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THE VISIT TO SIR THOMAS FANSHAW (p. 71).

HARRY FOSTER'S RULES.

BY

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"THE GREATEST IS CHARITY," "TREVOR COURT," ETC.

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"Not slothful in business."

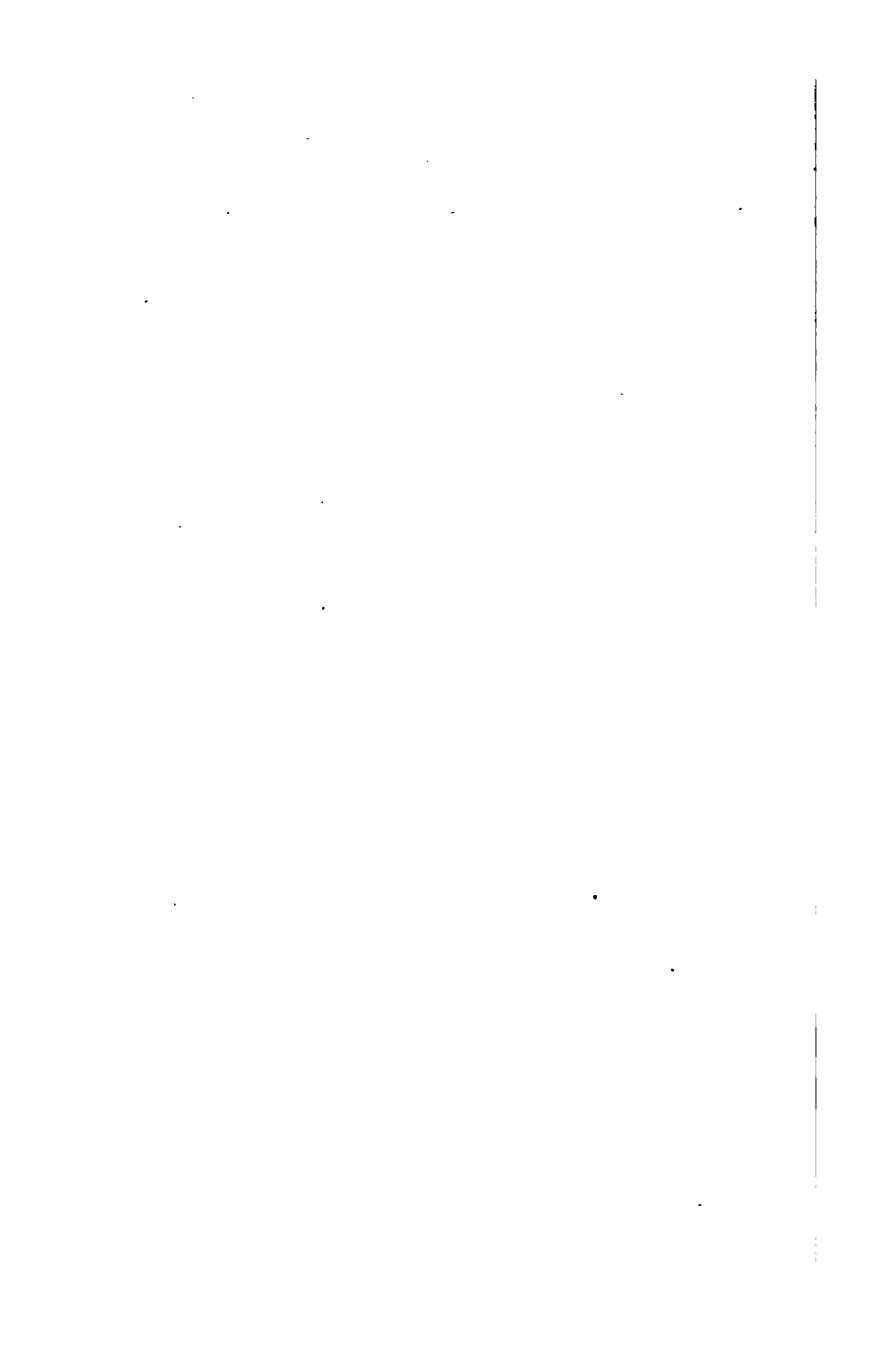
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HARRY FOSTER'S RULES.

CHAPTER I.

A GREAT SORROW.

“ H, sir, will my father die?” And the bright face of the boy of thirteen who thus questioned the doctor was clouded with sorrow and tears.

Dr. Allen looked pityingly at the boy so soon to be fatherless, and said,—

“Your father is in God’s hands, Harry, but I fear that nothing can save him now.”

“Does mother know?” asked the boy, who while returning from school had encountered the old woman who helped in nursing John Foster, and she had said to him, “Make haste home, Harry; your father is dying.” He had reached the door breathless with haste, and met the doctor leaving the house.

“Your mother does know, my boy,” was Dr. Allen’s reply to the filial inquiry; “and you must be her comforter in her sorrow when your father is gone; she will have no one left but you then.”

“I will, sir,” said the boy. And as the doctor left

him with a cheering word, he knew that Harry Foster would unflinchingly keep his promise.

Hastily wiping his eyes and controlling his grief, Harry Foster entered the house, and went softly upstairs to the room in which lay his dying father. The mother's quick ear, however, detected the sound of his footsteps. She opened the door, and held up her finger. One glance at her pale face and swollen eyelids, and Harry's firmness gave way.

"Oh, mother! mother!" he whispered, although she had closed the sick-room door. "Oh, is it true?"

The mother's arms closed round her boy, and for a few moments he sobbed out his sorrow on her bosom, while she restrained her own grief, and soothed him with comforting words.

"Your father's expecting you, Harry," she said at last.

The words roused him. He dried his tears, and followed his mother into the room.

Harry Foster had seen his sick father before going to school that morning, and the painful change now evinced in the dying man made him shrink back with a fear that his father was already dead; but at the movements in the room the heavy eyelids slowly opened, and as John Foster recognised his boy he smiled and feebly held out his hand.

"Come nearer, Harry," he said faintly. "I'm not in pain now, and God in His mercy has preserved my senses. I thank Him for it, because I want to say something to you before I die."

The boy approached the bed with awe as his father spoke. The words now uttered by dying lips were to his child like a message from the other world. The voice, however, was faint, and the bed not being much above the ground, the boy, to enable him to hear his father's last words, sank on his knees by the bed, and with a firm effort kept back the tears.

"Harry, my child," said the father, after a pause, "when I am gone, will you try to be a good son to your mother?"

"I will pray to God to help me to be, father," he replied in a faltering voice! "I know I want to be good."

"I believe you, my son, and I can trust you; but there is one subject more I want you to remember. When your uncle came to see me at the hospital, he promised to take you as an apprentice as soon as you could leave school. Would you like that, Harry?"

"Must I go to London without mother?" asked the boy. "Uncle's shop is in London, isn't it father?"

"Yes, Harry; but you must be guided by your mother; she will arrange it all for you." And John Foster closed his eyes, as if faint.

Mrs. Foster hastened to pour out a stimulant; and after drinking it eagerly, the dying man revived and said,—

"You would like to learn your uncle's business, Harry?"

"Oh, yes, father; and then, when I'm old enough to be a foreman like you, I can keep mother."

"God grant you may, my boy," said his father; "but to succeed in any undertaking you must follow the Bible rules, and trust in a higher strength than your own. Will you try to remember this, Harry?"

"Yes, I will indeed, father," he replied in a choking voice.

"I cannot talk any more," said the dying man; "but I will try to think of the promise, 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me'" (Jer. xlix. 11).

Excepting a few words of loving farewell to his sorrowing wife and child, John Foster spoke no more on earth.

Kind old Betty Frost came in soon after; but she could not persuade the mother or her child to leave the dying man, especially after another visit from Dr. Allen. John was then insensible; and the doctor's words, as he shook hands with the mourning wife, and laid his hand kindly on the boy's shoulder, kept them both in the room.

"He *may* last a few hours, Mrs. Foster; but even a few minutes may end it all."

"I will not leave him, Doctor," said Mrs. Foster. "Thank God! he suffers no pain."

In less than a hour the watchers round that bed saw a change pass over his face, yet so gently did the spirit of John Foster pass away to a holier and happier world, that some minutes elapsed before Ellen Foster could bring herself to believe that she was a widow and her boy fatherless.

When at last she realized the fact, and allowed herself to be led away from the room, she hastened down to her little parlour, followed by Harry. Then the long restraint upon her feelings gave way, and throwing herself on the sofa, she was for a time so overcome with grief that her boy checked his own tears to soothe her.

"Father's happy now, mother, isn't he?" said the boy; "so we oughtn't to cry; but I can't help it, and I dare say you can't; and I'm afraid you'll make yourself ill."

Old Betty came in at this moment with tea and an egg for each, and tried to cheer the poor mourners in her homely way.

"Looky here, now," she said, "you've not had a morsel in your lips since yesterday, and there's that boy hasn't had nothing all day 'cept his breakfast; what are ye a thinking of, Nell Foster?"

The rough yet kind words aroused the mother; she suppressed her tears for her boy's sake, and took some of the food from the table to encourage him to eat. Then she leaned back in the old-fashioned but comfortable easy-chair, and reflected on the past with a heavy heart.

Fourteen years before this sad day she had left her father's home to become the wife of John Foster then a journeyman, and after a time foreman to Mr. Helmsley, the owner of paper mills near Dartford in Kent. For several months John had been suffering from an internal complaint; and his employer, anxious

for his recovery, had obtained admission for his valued foreman to a hospital in London.

Finding at last that his case was hopeless, John expressed a wish to leave the hospital. "If I must die, Doctor," he had said to the house-surgeon, "let it be at home, with my wife and child near me."

The poor fellow's wishes were understood and carried out; but John only lived a week after being removed. Yet even for that Ellen Foster felt thankful, and the time came when Henry Foster recalled with deep gratitude the valuable advice of his dying father.

The death of Mr. Helmsley's foreman soon became known in the neighbourhood, one of those rural spots which are still found within twenty miles of London. The paper mills were built on each bank of a running stream, over which the high road was carried by a picturesque bridge.

In the immediate vicinity were rows of pretty cottages, inhabited principally by Mr. Helmsley's work-people; and at various distances from the mills, on rising ground, stood detached villas and mansions, occupied in most instances by city merchants, who could travel forward and back by train in less than half an hour. The ground rose gradually from the level banks of the river, especially in one direction, the noble trees and villa residences of varied styles of architecture showing to advantage on the rising ground, even to the brow of the hill.

The river, the mills, and the cottages lower down were literally embowered with trees and shrubberies,

and the steeple of the iron church alone showed itself to passengers by road or rail, above the foliage which surrounded it. Altogether, the site of Mr. Helmsley's paper mills formed one of the most attractive spots to travellers on the Dartford road, especially in summer, when the clear stream in which the stately swans moved gracefully, not only reflected their pure white plumage, but its other and leafy surroundings.

In one of the cottages, not far from the church, John Foster had resided ever since his marriage. It resembled those near it in architecture and surroundings,—being detached, with a garden in front and behind,—and in containing a parlour, kitchen, wash-house, etc., on the ground floor, and two bedrooms above. Some of the cottages, however, had a bedroom built out at the back, to accommodate larger families. In fact, Mr. Helmsley, who was landlord of these dwellings, had caused them to be built according to his own plans, and every cottage in which the wife was industrious and clean was truly like a little paradise on earth.

Such a cottage was the one occupied by Ellen Foster and her husband; and therefore not only Mr. Helmsley, but Mr. Sinclair, the incumbent, were interested in the future of the widow and her son. These two gentlemen met on the afternoon of John Foster's death, and the former exclaimed, as they stopped and shook hands,—

“I'm going to inquire after my late foreman, poor fellow! he was dying this morning.”

"John Foster has changed this life for a better," replied Mr. Sinclair; "he died at four o'clock this afternoon. I have just left his widow."

"Poor John!" remarked his late master; "he was one of those whom we could least spare; I have missed him greatly, and such a husband must be a loss to a wife which nothing can replace. How does she bear it?"

"Most painfully," replied the clergyman; "but this is natural at the very first moment of sorrow; nothing but time can make such a separation endurable; yet I know that Ellen Foster will not sorrow as those that have no hope, and she knows where to seek for true consolation."

"Did he suffer much at last?" asked Mr. Helmsley.

"No, not for many hours. Dr. Allen told me this morning that mortification had set in, and Ellen says he expressed himself quite free from pain, and was sensible and able to talk till within an hour of his death."

"Ah, well, poor thing, I won't trouble her yet; but I mean to add to the club money, and, to show my respect to her husband's memory, to accompany several of his fellow-workmen in following him to his grave."

Poor Ellen was indeed overcome with emotion when Mr. Helmsley called upon her to state his intentions respecting the funeral. Yet her pride in the husband who had so gained the respect of his fellows was mixed with an increase of regret at his loss, which for a time made her sorrow more bitter.

The day for the funeral was fixed for Saturday, as on that day the men left off work at two o'clock, and by three the little hamlet was astir. Few who witnessed that procession will forget its appearance.

First came the coffin, covered with a pall, and carried by six of his fellow-workmen; the pall-bearers being Mr. Helmsley himself, his two sons, and poor John's successor, the present foreman.

Behind the coffin followed the widow and her boy; then came George Foster, her late husband's brother, and one or two other distant relatives; and after these, three abreast, nearly the whole of the men employed in Mr. Helmsley's mills.

Passengers along the road paused to gaze at the long procession as it wound slowly in and out between the trees, now radiant in the pale green foliage of early spring. A large crowd had assembled in the churchyard, which as yet contained but few graves, and respectfully formed a line on either side for the funeral to pass into the church.

Poor Ellen was too much absorbed in her grief to notice or even think of the number who were following her husband; but when in church she became conscious that the temporary building was full to overflowing.

Mr. Sinclair, as many clergymen are at such times, was well pleased to see so many present in church when the solemn occasion compels them to listen to St. Paul's glorious words on the resurrection, in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Even Ellen Foster, in the midst of her grief, felt a thrill

of joy as she listened to the words uttered with so much fervour by Mr. Sinclair—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." During the silent walk home, in Ellen Foster's heart rose a hope, which was almost a prayer, that John Foster's boy, though deprived of his father's example and teachings, might grow to manhood to be as loved and respected as he whose body they had laid in the cold grave to rest till the resurrection morn.

"Oh, I do hope I shall grow up and be as good a man as my father," said Harry to himself, as he walked by his mother's side in silence. "I will try with all my might. But I wonder where those Bible rules are about business. Perhaps mother knows. However, I'll read a chapter every day all through the New Testament, and I shall be sure to find them. But I'm puzzled: I never thought that there could be anything in the Bible about business."

We shall see as the story proceeds whether Harry Foster forgot to search for the Bible rules or not.

CHAPTER II.

LEAVING THE OLD HOME.

“**M**OTHER,” said Harry one day, about a week after the funeral, “when am I to go to be ‘prenticed to Uncle George?”

“Not till the autumn, Harry. Your uncle’s apprenticeship isn’t out of his time yet, and he can’t keep two.”

“Are you going to stay here?” he asked.

“No, Harry; I haven’t money enough to pay the rent every week and buy us food and clothes. Mr. Helmsley is so kind, he is letting me stay here rent free till I can find a new tenant who will buy the furniture.”

“Oh, mother, all these things that you’ve had so long, must you sell them?”

“I may keep back a few articles, Harry; but the rest must go to support us till you go to London.”

“And what will you do then, mother?”

“Well, Harry,” she said, “I’ve written home to your grandfather, and asked him to let me come and keep house for him. You know, since your grandmother died, he’s only had the farm servants to help him, and he’s getting old.”

"And will he have you there, mother?"

"Yes; I've had a letter, and he says I'm to come as soon as the house is let and the furniture sold; and, Harry, you're to go with me, and stay at Rose Farm till your uncle is ready to receive you."

"Oh, mother, how jolly! Oh, I think I'd rather be a farmer after all, mother. When I get to Rose Farm, won't I go in for all the farm work!"

Mrs. Foster smiled, almost for the first time since her husband's death; she was, however, wise enough not to damp her boy's ardour about farming. "Let him try it," she said to herself. "I don't think such rough work and labour is likely to suit Harry; he's too fond of learning and reading, just like his father was; and he'd never make a fortune at farming, but he may in London." Then she said aloud, "You shall learn as much farming as you like, Harry, but you must have patience. We cannot move till we get the money for the furniture."

Mrs. Foster, however, had friends among the men who had worked with her husband. Mr. Helmsley also, and Mr. Sinclair, both interested themselves on her behalf when she explained her position to them.

In consequence of this a new tenant was soon found, who purchased the furniture, and within a month after John Foster's death the widow and her boy were preparing for a journey to Rose Farm, which was situated in a rural and fertile spot within a mile of Colchester. Not till the time arrived for them to leave did Ellen Foster realize the true kindness of her husband's

friends. Several called to say good-bye, and brought with them little trifles, such as they could afford, as keepsakes. Mrs. Sinclair, on her last visit, delighted Harry's heart by presenting him with a Bible in which she had written his name, with the words underneath, "Search the Scriptures."

"I can't tell how to express my gratitude for all the kindness I've received, ma'am," said Ellen to her visitor, "but I know it isn't because I deserve it, only through my dear husband, who was so good and clever that everybody loved him. I'm sure no one ever had more kind friends. Mrs. Helmsley has paid our fare to Colchester, and poor John's old master has promised not to forget Harry, if he conducts himself well in his situation. And then the funeral, ma'am; what honour everybody paid to my dear husband's memory! I'm sure he never expected it, for he was a most humble-minded man."

"Well, then, my dear Mrs. Foster," replied the clergyman's wife, "you ought to feel happy and proud at the thought that you have for fourteen years been the wife of such a good man. What you say of him reminds me of many texts: 'Them that honour Me I will honour,' and 'Before honour is humility.' I am sure this is proved in your husband's life and death. Ah, my dear child," continued the lady, addressing Harry, "I hope you will follow in your dear father's steps; for he not only searched the Scriptures, but he carried out the rules they taught in all things. Some people think that all power of doing good for others

is gone after a man's death ; but the words of Scripture used in the burial service at your dear husband's funeral, Mrs. Foster, deny this : ' I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labour, and their works do follow them.' And again in the 11th of Hebrews, St. Paul says that ' Abel by his faith, being dead, yet speaketh.' "

" Oh, ma'am," said Ellen Foster, " I wish I knew the Bible as well as you do ; but I remember those texts, and I'm sure they've been proved in poor John's case : all his works have followed him, and made every one kind to me and my orphan boy."

" I hope Harry will search the Scriptures," said Mrs. Sinclair, " and know them as well as his father did ; and, Harry, if you look over Dr. Watts's hymns (I think it is No. 38 in the second book), you will find two lines which apply to your father—they are easily learnt,—

' The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when they sleep in dust.'

And now I must say good-bye," added the kind lady, rising ; and as she shook hands warmly with the widow and her son, she said, " God bless and take care of you both, and I will pray that your fatherless boy may be led and guided by Him who is the Father of the fatherless and defendeth the cause of the widow."

With streaming eyes and a faltering voice, Ellen said

"good-bye" to her kindest friend, while Harry ran out to open the garden gate for her, and said,—

"I will try to remember what you've said to-day, ma'am ; it's just like father used to talk to me."

Mrs. Sinclair's heart was too full to reply, but she again pressed the boy's hand, and turned away.

"The child of such a father can never forsake the right path," she said to herself ; "I have faith enough to believe that ; and I can pray for him, and indeed for both : the mother's faith and principles are not yet fixed or unwavering."

Harry put his Bible carefully away in his box, after reading a chapter as he had resolved to do that he might find the rules spoken of by his father.

"Oh !" said the boy to himself, "if poor dear Dad could only have kept strong enough to speak a little longer, just to tell me where to find these rules, I should have been all right ; however," he added, as he laid his head on his pillow for the last time in the cottage in which he had first drawn breath, "I'm sure to find out if I read every chapter from Matthew to Revelation."

Harry had never heard of a book called a Concordance, or the verses referred to by his father would have been quickly found under the word "business." And beyond all this, he had not yet learnt to trust in God as a Father, or to pray to Him in any trial or difficulty, however trifling ; not in a prayer he had learnt by rote, but in his own words, as a child addressing a father. He was very soon sleeping the

sleep of health, and his last thoughts had been on the morrow's trip, which had all the delight and novelty of a railway journey and a visit to his grandfather at a farm-house.

The morning so longed for by Harry rose without a cloud, and perhaps the boyish exultation he displayed cheered his mother. She would not dim his happiness by even a hint at her own regrets. Not till the boxes were brought out and placed on a railway truck did the poor widow lose her self-restraint.

"What station, Mrs. Foster, shall I label them for?" asked the porter.

"Colchester," she replied.

"All right, I'll do it, and get the boxes into the van for you. You needn't hurry ; there's plenty of time."

After seeing the man off, Mrs. Foster said,—

"I'll just go over the house once more, Harry, to see if we've left anything behind."

"And I'll come too, mother," he replied.

Ellen and her boy entered the house, passed into the kitchen and out-houses, then into the parlour, and at last upstairs to the bedrooms. But this last glance at the old familiar furniture and rooms in which she had lived a happy wife for fourteen years recalled old memories so painfully, that she returned hastily to the parlour, and throwing herself into a chair, burst into an agony of tears.

In spite of his happiness, this sorrow of his mother's brought tears in the boy's eyes, but at last he checked himself and said,—

"Poor mother! I'm sure it must make you awfully unhappy to leave this nice house, where you've lived so many years, and I feel miserable too; but you shall have another just as good some day when I grow a man. I mean to go in for hard work, I do indeed."

Words like these quickly roused the mother from her sorrow. She rose hastily, wiped her eyes, and stifled her sobs as she said, "I know it's wrong, Harry, but I couldn't help it; and now we must make haste, or we shall miss the train."

While thus speaking she left the house, and, locking the door, sent Harry with the key to a neighbour. "The new people will be here to-day, Mrs. Lock," said the boy, as she took the key and said, "All right; it will be quite safe with me." Then seeing Mrs. Foster waiting for her son at the gate, she ran out, as she said, to say "Good-bye once more," and wish the widow a happy future.

At last, amidst hand-waving and farewells as they passed the cottages, Ellen and her boy reached the lane, and quickening their pace, arrived at the station only just in time to take their tickets.

The kind porter, however, who had labelled their boxes, helped them as attentively as if he had expected a shilling fee. At last, after he had shown Harry the boxes in the van, and found comfortable seats for him and his mother in the train, Ellen took out a shilling and offered it to the porter.


"No, indeed," he replied. "Catch me taking a farthing from John Foster's widow. It's very good

of you, Mrs. Foster, but I won't take it. And now you're off," he added, closing the door and wishing them good-bye, to which Ellen could only reply by waving her hand. The man's kindness brought the ready tears, and choked her attempts to speak.

As the train sped on, however, she became more at ease, and could at last smile at Harry's eager delight as they passed cherry orchards and hop gardens, the former loaded with unripe fruit, the latter consisting as yet merely of bare poles. However, when at last the train drew up at Colchester station, Harry was very thankful to find the journey to an end.

CHAPTER III.

TOWN AND COUNTRY.

“ELL, my girl, you've come back to your
ould father again.”

The speaker stood at the rose-covered porch of a rose-covered cottage, assisting Ellen and her boy to alight from a “chay” cart which had been sent to the station to fetch them. The old farmer's words were cheerful, and bespoke a warm welcome. He did not wait for a reply, but turning to Harry he said,—

“So this is your boy, Ellen? He's a stout chap for his age. But come in, come in; I've got a good supper for ye; you must be hungry, after such a long journey by them fly-away trains.”

Ellen's thoughts on entering the home of her childhood and youth were at first scarcely less painful than those on leaving Mill Cottages; but they did not last long. The sweet country air, the smell of the sea, and the farm in its summer aspect, formed a great contrast to the months in which she had been separated from her husband while he was in the

hospital, and the last sad week which had taken him from her. As for Harry, the delights of novelty were added to all these advantages. With the buoyant spirits of early youth, the boy had thrown off in a month the sorrow caused by his father's death, and only now thought of him as a good and religious man who had gone to be happy for ever in heaven. John Foster's last words to his boy would, however, never be forgotten. Even in his gayest moments they would return to his memory; only to be dismissed by a resolve uttered mentally, "I'll never forget what my poor father said about the Bible rules. I shall find them some day; and I will try to be a good man like he was, and take care of mother."

When seated at the well-supplied table in the farm kitchen, Harry would have exclaimed, "Oh, what a jolly supper!" had he felt himself more at home. At all events, he showed his appreciation of it, and amused his mother greatly by the eager enjoyment with which he ate up all that his grandfather supplied him with.

The change of air and the journey had also been already beneficial to Ellen, and she was surprised at her own appetite. That night, when preparing to sleep in the room which had once been her own, sad thoughts arose; yet Ellen Foster could only kneel and offer up the prayer she had learnt by heart as a child; she was still a stranger to the childlike feeling that can tell its sorrows to God as to a Father who has not only the will but the power to help us. Sleep

came at last, in spite of painful thoughts ; and the widow rose in the morning refreshed, and ready to accompany her aged father over the small farm he owned, which however by industry he had made very productive.

As for Harry, he was wild with delight. He followed the farm labourers from place to place, fed the poultry and the pigeons, examined the progress of the fruit in the orchard towards ripeness, and in fact spent the whole day out of doors, excepting when summoned to meals.

"This change will set the boy up, father," said Ellen to the old man one day, "and prepare him for business with his uncle."

"What business be it, Nell?" he asked.

"Grocery, and what is called a general shop," she replied. "George tells me he is doing a good trade, and promises to take Harry into partnership, if he's steady and goes on well."

"I'm not fond of Lunnun for boys," replied the old man ; "but as he's to be with a relation, it's all right perhaps. Wouldn't you like him to be a farmer, Nell? I've got nobody to leave this farm to but you and him."

"I believe his father wished me to accept George's offer, father, and I shouldn't like to go against that." But she did not repeat aloud another thought—"Harry's a clever boy, and I believe he'll make more money in a business than at farming."

"I wouldn't upset the father's wishes for the world,

Nelly," said her father. "He was a good man, and you'd best bide by what he said in everything."

And so in pleasant outdoor amusements, and in learning no little of farming, Harry Foster passed the time till the September in which his uncle had said he would be able to receive him. The boy was in fact becoming rather tired of the farm. It was all very well during the haymaking season, and while the fruit was ripe, and very delightful to watch the growth of chicks and ducklings or the unfledged pigeons. Then jam-making time was, as Harry called it, "jolly"; and the corn-reaping in the one only large field belonging to the farm was a great excitement, when followed at last by a glorious harvest-home on a small scale. But now that September was come, with its shortened days, and all the summer delights were over, one only compensation remaining—the autumn fruits—Harry began to feel tired of a country life, and longed for change.

He had grown tall and strong, and having passed his fourteenth birthday while at the farm, his mother could not deny that it was time for him to begin to earn his own living. A letter therefore from Mr. George Foster was anxiously looked for. It came at last, and in it was stated that Henry Foster's uncle was ready to receive his nephew as soon as his mother could arrange to send him. Hereupon a great bustle arose at the farm, the boy himself being as full of excitement at the idea of going to London, as he had been about the visit to his grandfather.

"I will send him nice and respectable, father," said poor Ellen, as boxes and books and new clothes, which she had ordered or made herself, were being packed for travelling. "I hope they'll be taken care of and mended properly: there's one comfort, I've taught him to sew on a button."

"Harry must learn to fight his way as others do," said the old farmer. "I suppose you mean him to go by himself, Ellen? better let him travel alone; he'll manage, I'll warrant; Harry's sharp enough."

The day of departure came; the light cart stood at the door, and while the boxes were being placed in it, Harry turned to the old farmer and said, "Good-bye, grandfather: you've been so kind, and I've been very happy here."

"Good-bye, lad, God bless you," said the old man, in faltering tones; "and when your uncle gives you a holiday, come here and stay with me and your mother."

"Oh, that will be jolly!" cried the boy. "Oh, thank you, grandfather!" and full of glee he sprang into the cart, followed more slowly by his mother.

Poor mother, she had controlled herself for her boy's sake. He should not be made unhappy by knowing how it pained her to part with him; yet, as they neared the station, she almost regretted that she had come with him. However, the bustle on the platform, the purchase of the ticket, and seeing the boxes labelled, so occupied her, that until she saw her boy about to enter the train she did not realize that he was really going to leave her.

"Good-bye, my dearest boy," she said, as she threw her arms around him fondly, regardless of all observers. And Harry returned her affection. The thought that he was really going away from his mother drove away the foolish, shy pride, which so often makes a boy ashamed of returning a mother's or a sister's love before strangers.

But the guard's words, "Take your seats, please," drove Harry into the carriage; and as his mother's "Good-bye once more, Harry," sounded in his ears, the train moved, and Ellen returned to the cart, to be driven to the farm alone.

Behind her widow's veil she threw off all restraint, and so relieved herself by a burst of tears before she reached home, that she was able to meet her father with a calmness which puzzled him. His aged eyes could not distinguish the swollen and the reddened eyelids.

While the train in which Harry Foster is a passenger is speeding on to London, we will take a peep at his future home, and the family who are expecting him.

Mr. George Foster's shop is situated in one of the streets leading out of Oxford Street, and about three doors from that great thoroughfare.

That gentleman is standing behind the counter; but those who have known Harry's father would never have supposed them to be brothers.

John Foster, while in health, even at his work, was always neat and presentable, both in person and clothes.

George, though but three years older than his brother, appeared beyond middle age, on account of his careless, untidy appearance and slouching gait.

A customer was ordering a number of articles, which the master desired the shop-boy to bring to him, or to weigh out, while he stood in a lazy attitude, with his hands in his pockets, enjoying the gossip of his female customer. The door leading from the house to the shop opened, and a little girl appeared.

"Father, dinner's ready."

"Fashionable hours, Mr. Foster," said the customer, with a laugh.

"Oh, we don't dine at three always," he replied. "We've put off dinner because my nephew's expected. One o'clock's my time."

"And a very good time too. And now I'll go. You've got the list."

"Have you made out the list for Sir Thomas's housekeeper, Tom?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right; bring the things round soon, there's a good fellow," said Mrs. Ward, addressing Tom. "Good afternoon, Mr. Foster. Now go and get your dinner; you must want it by this time?"

After a laughing reply, George Foster entered the parlour.

"I declare the dinner's quite spoilt, George, waiting so long," said Mrs. Foster. "Are you sure Ellen's letter said three o'clock?"

"Well, I read it so; but never mind now, let us

eat it while we've got it ; and as the boy is not here to his time, he must put up with tea when he does come."

Meanwhile Tom the shop-boy was left to grumble alone over his privations.

"I'm to take these things to Sir Thomas Fanshaw's, all the way to Park Lane, before I gets any dinner. I wonder what sort the governor's nevvv is."

Other customers put a stop to Tom's soliloquy for some minutes, and when at last relieved of their presence, he began again,—

"What a miserable house this is ! Sometimes we have dinner at half-past twelve, and then perhaps next day we don't get breakfast till ten ; this morning it was half-past eight, and I haven't tasted a bit of food since ; I feel quite ravenous. I hope there's enough left for me—— Oh, good gracious ! here's a cab and no end of luggage !" and Tom Ford, in dismay, rushed into the parlour.

"There's a cab at the door, sir, and some one's getting out."

"Some one ! Who ? a man or a woman ?"

"No, sir, a boy."

"George, it's Harry Foster, no doubt," said Mrs. Foster ; and as her husband hastened to the shop she cast her eyes over the table, and said, "I hope there's enough left for him and Tom ; if there isn't, Tom must go without, that's all."

But poor Tom was to be spared such cruel treatment ; for when Henry appeared at the door with his

uncle, who was lamenting that they had not waited dinner for him, the boy exclaimed,—

“But I’ve had my dinner, uncle; I didn’t leave Colchester till one o’clock, so I couldn’t get here till four.”

“One o’clock! Why, George,” said his wife, “you told me we were to expect Henry at one.”

“I suppose I read Ellen’s letter wrong then,” he said.

“Of course you did, father,” said Harry’s eldest cousin, a girl of fifteen: “look, here’s aunt’s letter, and it says that Harry will be here about four.”

“Just like your father,” began Mrs. George Foster; but her husband stopped all further discussion by saying,—

“Don’t keep the boy here while you are settling whether I am wrong or right. Here, Fanny, or one of you, show your cousin where he’s to sleep, and then get all these remains of dinner cleared away, while the boy washes his hands and refreshes himself after his journey.”

Poor Harry, quite bewildered by all this confusion, followed his cousin Fanny up a broad, old-fashioned staircase to a room on the second floor.

“Why, Ann, isn’t the room ready yet?” exclaimed Fanny Foster as they entered, and found the young servant-of-all-work making the bed.

“It’s all done, Miss, now, but putting water in the jug; only you’ve not given me a clean towel, and there’s no soap.”

Ann finished the bed as she spoke, and seizing the water jug, followed Fanny, who had rushed away to get towel and soap, thus leaving Harry Foster standing alone in the room, which needed only clean and busy hands to make it a comfortable apartment. It was large in comparison with his neat little bedroom at Mill Cottages, and contained far handsomer furniture, but the window curtains were awry, and the bedstead and chairs out of place ; yet Harry did not despair.

"I'll arrange it my own way," he said to himself, "and make it look more snug. Uncle's got a larger house than I expected, and it's a famous shop ; but what a close, disagreeable smell the houses have in London ! and the parlour and the dinner-table seemed in such a muddle. I'm sure I must have frightened them all ; for no one said, 'How do you do ?' or shook hands with me."

While thus soliloquizing, Harry was unpacking his carpet bag. The entrance of Ann with water, towel, and soap put a stop to his musing.

"Tea will be ready presently, sir, if you'll go down into the parlour."

"All right," said Harry, amused at being addressed as "sir ;" but in truth the tall, fresh-coloured youth appeared so superior and well dressed in that ill-managed house, that even his uncle had been surprised into politeness.

When Harry found his way downstairs to the parlour his aunt and cousins received him more graciously ; they had convicted his uncle of carelessness in reading

the letter ; and as Tom had enjoyed a hasty dinner during Harry's absence, matters were all smoothed down, while a very plentifully supplied tea-table was provocative of an appetite in the young traveller.

It was by this time past six o'clock, and London is dark at that hour in September. The lighted gas in the parlour rendered that room, which on Harry's arrival had looked so desolate, bright and pleasant.

His aunt and cousins still wore deep mourning for Harry's father, and by gaslight he could not distinguish the soiled and unmended condition of their dresses. At all events, Harry spent a very pleasant evening in his new home, especially after the shop was shut and his uncle joined them. A piano stood in the room, and the girls played some well-known airs with tolerable correctness, to Harry's great delight. After supper Mr. Foster gave his nephew some little insight into business matters, which rather surprised John Foster's son. His surprise was increased when, at eleven o'clock, the family retired to their rooms without kneeling together in prayer and thanksgiving for the mercies of the day. Never in his young life had Henry Foster, from the age of three years, gone to his bed without first kneeling with his parents in family prayer. And at Rose Farm the farm servants assembled morning and evening, while his grandfather read a chapter in the Bible and offered up prayer to God. "Habit is second nature," is a well-known proverb, and John Foster's son felt as if a vacuum had occurred in his existence when he and his uncle's family retired

to rest without asking God's protection during the night, or thanking Him for the mercies of the day. At length, dismissing this subject, Harry, as he laid his head on his pillow, recalled his uncle's words.

"Are you an early riser, my boy?" he asked.


"Oh, yes, uncle ; my father had to be at the mills every morning in summer by six, and in the winter at daylight, and at Rose Farm we were often out in the fields before five."

"Ah, yes ; but that sort of thing don't do in London. However, if you're such an early riser, Harry, you are sure to hear Tom the shop-boy knock, and will you let him in? Ann is such a sound sleeper, she sometimes keeps him at the door half an hour."

All this puzzled poor Harry ; and while wondering if these were the business habits taught by the Bible rules his dear father had spoken of, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

GEORGE FOSTER'S BUSINESS HABITS.

HEN Harry Foster rose next morning, it was nearly seven o'clock; for the daylight, only admitted by a window looking upon the backs of houses and outbuildings, was greatly delayed.

"I suppose it's not much after six," said Harry to himself. "However, I'll get up, and not keep the shopman waiting at the door."

Suiting the action to the word, he sprang out of bed. On the dressing-table lay his poor father's watch, which his mother had given him, with many tears and injunctions to take care of it. His pride in the new acquisition, and the fact that his dear father had carried it, made the boy determined that, come what may, he would preserve it carefully. Glancing at it now, as it lay face uppermost, he was startled to find that the hands pointed to five minutes to seven.

"I must make haste," he thought, as he dressed and washed with great rapidity; "if the shopman comes before I'm ready, no matter, I'll go down as I am."

But Harry was fully dressed, and his watch pointed to twenty minutes past seven, before a loud peal

sounded from a bell on the staircase above. In a space of time that seemed impossible to Tom Ford, he heard the bolts drawn, and then the door was opened, and Harry, clean and quite dressed, presented himself to the astonished shop-boy.

"Well, I say, if you ain't an early riser! Why, the neighbours over the way will be chalking it up."

"Chalking what up?" said Harry. "Why, it's half-past seven already."

"Yes, I know, and the shop'll be opened and swept afore eight; won't that be something to chalk up for Foster's shop?"

"Why, my father always went to work by six o'clock in summer. But don't let us talk; I want to help you take down the shutters."

"Oh!" exclaimed Tom, "it would kill the governor to get up so early. Was your father a strong man?"

"No, he wasn't," said Harry; "but please don't talk about him."

Tom became silent: there was something in this youth so very different to Mr. Foster's former apprentices, that a feeling of respect arose in the young man's heart for his new associate. Though called a shop-boy, and shorter than Harry, he was over twenty. Added to this, George Foster knew his value. In any other house he would have been worth more wages than his master gave him; for Tom Ford was active, industrious, and honest. Had he not possessed the latter quality, he might have robbed his master with ease.

The bright activity of the new apprentice just suited him ; and as Harry cheerfully helped when he could, and tried to learn where he was ignorant, Tom said to himself, "We'll get on first-rate, me and this 'ere youngster. It's no end of a good thing for Foster that he's got his nephew here. I hope he isn't a-going to turn out a new broom."

Tom was one of those very rare characters who can talk and work at the same time, and perhaps he made an effort on this occasion to answer the questions addressed to him by Harry, who, seated on a stool, watched his movements with great interest.

"Have you been here long?" he asked.

"Yes, I've a-been four year with your uncle. Lor! you should ha' seen the shop when I come to it; there was no end of a muddle; I'm sure I've a-wasted hours looking for things as had been stowed away nobody knowed where, and then customers wouldn't wait, and in course went to other shops."

"But uncle's got a good business, hasn't he?" asked Harry.

"Well, he might have a better, but he owns I've a-done no end o' good since I been here. Why, I keeps the day-book, and makes up the accounts every night, and goes to customers with things: why, if I wasn't honest, I could cheat the governor no end, and he'd never be a bit the wiser."

"Who taught you to be honest, Tom?"

"Why, the poor old mother; she's been a widder for ten years; and, I don't mind telling you, father was a

bad man, and he was sent to penal servitude for life; but he's dead now, and poor mother had only me, and she's taught me good things, and made me so afraid of being dishonest, because God is always close by, that I wouldn't touch a farthing's worth for any money, if it wasn't my own."

A customer came in at this moment, who wanted eggs, and sugar and other articles already made up in packets.

"I'll do it," whispered Harry, slipping off the stool and placing himself behind the counter.

While with Tom's directions Harry brought the required articles, the woman turned to Tom, and said,—

"You're early this morning, Mr. Ford, and I declare the shop's looking quite smart and clean."

"It's all along of our new 'prentice, Mrs. Lane; he's master's nevvvy, and he's going in for getting up early."

"Ah, that's the time o' day. Why I've a-been up ever since five, a-washing, and now I'm going to get my man's breakfast by the time he comes home."

At this moment the door from the parlour to the shop opened, and a voice exclaimed—

"Well, I never!"

"Never what?" asked Tom.

"Why, here's the shop open and clean, and customers a-buying things at eight o'clock!"

"Now, don't you stop a-chattering there, Ann, or we shan't get breakfast till nine or ten o'clock."

"Yes you will. I yeard Master Harry go down to let you in, and so I got up, and the kettle's nearly

boiling ; and if young Master don't mind the kitchen, I'll have breakfast ready in no time."

"Not I !" exclaimed Harry ; "I begin to want my breakfast, and I'll have it anywhere you like."

But as Ann closed the door, a thought struck the boy, and he said,—

"Perhaps my uncle would like me to have my meals with the family."

"What, breakfast !" laughed Tom ; "why, they're never down all together, and it's the most awfulest muddle. No. All right ; now you're here, you can just go down and have yours first in the kitchen, and then you can watch the shop while I goes. Ann won't be long ; there's the making of a good servant in that there gal ; she's only fifteen, and she's no end of work to do in this house, and them young gals won't put their hands to a thing."

Several customers came in, upon whom Tom waited, and Harry watched all he did with a determination to learn. When they were again alone he said,—

"You don't sleep here, Tom ?"

"No ; mother likes me to be at home with her ; she works hard at a sewing-machine, and so we puts our money together, and lives comfortable, and it's so nice to have Sunday all to ourselves." Tom paused, and then said, "You've been used to go to church or chapel on a Sunday, ain't yer ? I heard master say once that his brother John should ha' been a Methody parson."

"My father was a very good man," said Harry, softly, "and I always went to Sunday-school as well as to church on a Sunday."

Tom was about to reply, when a quiet summons from Ann called Harry to breakfast. He followed her to the kitchen without delay, and found a famous meal prepared for him, over which he lost no time, in his anxiety for Tom to follow him.

"I'll poor out yer coffee," said Ann, "and then keep it hot for Tom, and you can help yerself to bread and butter. I must get breakfast ready for the parlour now, for I hears master a-getting up."

Harry, left to himself, finished his meal quickly, and returning to the shop, sent Tom away, and taking his place behind one of the counters, held himself in readiness for the next customer.

In a few minutes a respectable woman entered the shop, and looked with surprise at the tall bright boy who occupied Tom's place. So neat and superior was the appearance of the stranger, that the customer looked round the shop, and said in a bewildered tone,—

"I want to order some articles."

"I can attend to you, ma'am," said Harry; "I'm the new apprentice."

"Oh, that's all right then; will you book the articles I name, to Sir Thomas Fanshaw?"

"Yes, ma'am;" and Harry turned to a desk, and dipping a pen in the ink, waited for her orders. He laid a piece of paper before him, and said to himself

"They can be entered into the day-book by-and-by, for fear I should make a mistake."

Harry was busily writing down the articles named when the parlour door opened, and George Foster, unshaved and uncombed, looking the picture of untidiness, made his appearance.

"What in harness already, Harry!" said his uncle, half surprised and half afraid.

"Yes, uncle," said the boy. "I hope I'm doing it right."

Mr. Foster took up the paper, and read the items aloud.

"Is that correct, Mrs. Ward?"

"Perfectly," she replied; "and so this is your nevvv, Mr. Foster? well, I think you'll find him very useful. He's not apprenticed yet, I suppose?"

"No; his mother wishes him to try how he likes the business and London; you see he's been brought up in the country."

"So I can see by his looks," she replied; "and I hope for your sake he'll stay," she continued to herself. "That boy's a cut above his uncle, and yet he and his father were brothers."

Tom entered the shop just as Mrs. Ward departed, and Mr. Foster exclaimed,—

"So you've had your breakfast in the kitchen, Tom! I wish you had done the same Harry."

"I have, uncle, and I'm glad you don't object."

"No indeed, my boy; you see I can't get my people up in the morning, and so I have my breakfast

late. If you don't mind the kitchen, Ann can always get yours and Tom's earlier."

Mr. Foster re-entered the parlour, where Fanny, the eldest girl, in a dirty black gingham frock and rough hair twisted into an untidy knot behind, was making the tea. "Make haste, girl," exclaimed her father; "why do you lie in bed in this way? it will be nearly ten o'clock before I get into the shop."

"Oh, Tom will manage without you all right, now Harry's there. Is he coming to breakfast?"

"No; had it long ago in the kitchen."

"Oh, what a comfort! I'm sure he's a very odd boy; and now there's two religious ones, we shall have to look to our p's and q's if they come in to breakfast. I'm not going to get up early to please a boy like him, and so I'm jolly glad he's had his breakfast in the kitchen."

While Harry in the shop was seizing every opportunity for learning his business, and his uncle was looking on, the rest of the family came down one by one to breakfast; therefore the soiled and greased tablecloth had scarcely been removed before it became necessary to provide for dinner. Poor Ann was called away from her work, and sent to the different tradespeople for what should have been ordered hours before, and of course, what with gossip and scandal at the shops, she did not return for nearly an hour. Consequently two o'clock arrived before the half-cooked dinner was ready.

But it is not necessary to describe further the

misery of a home, or the losses that will occur in a business, where, instead of "diligence," there is idleness and waste, and where energy, which is implied in "fervency of spirit," not only in our duties, but in serving the Lord, is absent.

Well for Harry Foster that he had a true friend in his uncle's humble but high-principled shop-boy.

Before Sunday, in his first week in London, Harry had heard with surprise that neither his uncle nor his family rose early enough on Sunday to attend a place of worship.

"Don't they get up at all on Sunday?" asked Harry of his friend.

"Oh, yes, they gits up about twelve, and has dinner at two," he replied; "and in the afternoons, when it's fine, they dresses, even while they're in black, so smart—I means the missis and the gals—that you wouldn't know 'em, and goes out for a walk."

"I shouldn't like to do that," said Harry; "it would make mother so unhappy if I didn't go to church or somewhere; and you should have heard my father talk about it. He used to say that people who are wicked, or those who say they don't believe the Bible, almost always began to do wrong by giving up going to a place of worship."

"Your father was a real good 'un," said Tom, "I'm sure o' that; but I say, would you mind going to our chapel? It's not church, you know."

"Oh, Tom, I should like it very much. My old grandfather is a Wesleyan, and we used to walk some-

times to Colchester, nearly a mile, while I stayed at the farm. But, Tom, do you think my uncle will mind?"

"Not he, Harry; but I daresay he will ask you to go holiday-making next Sunday, if it's fine."

"Oh, dear! I shan't know what to say, Tom; it would be so kind of uncle to ask me."

Harry, however, was spared this difficulty. Tom cleared the way for him by asking if Master Foster might go to church with him.

"Of course he can. All right, Tom; I'm glad you spoke. I know his parents were very particular about going to church and all that, and I shouldn't like him to be wandering about London on Sundays by himself."

And so George Foster quieted his conscience about his brother's boy.

Poor John! had he suspected for a moment the habits and customs of the home offered to him by his brother for his child, how eagerly he would have endeavoured to prevent Harry from accepting it!

A month passed, and Harry Foster, accompanied by Tom Ford and his mother, both respectably dressed, attended the Wesleyan Chapel in the morning, and in the evening went to a church in Baker Street, to hear a good and clever man who was then the incumbent.

More than once Harry drank tea with Tom and his mother; and he could not help comparing the neat cosy parlour and clean table-cloth, on which the best

china tea-things were laid, with the tea-table in his uncle's house.

The boy had entered heart and soul into the business at first, and very quickly proved to his uncle that in his brother's son he had found a clever, intelligent assistant.

But it was not to be supposed that a boy at an age so easily influenced by example could quite avoid falling sometimes into the evil habits of the house. It first showed itself in his person and dress, and more than once Tom had been kept waiting nearly half an hour, because Harry, after hearing the bell, was too lazy to rouse himself. Another temptation was now placed in his way. One Sunday morning, while Mr. Foster's family were at breakfast, and the clock pointed to the hour of noon, Mrs. Foster remarked,—

"It's a lovely day for October, George ; where shall we go this afternoon ?"

"Well," he said, "I was thinking of hiring Joe Thomas's double chaise for a drive, and then Harry could go."

"That would be nice," said Fanny ; "but shan't we be crowded ? The chaise only holds four."

"Sophy can sit between me and her mother in front. Fanny, your cousin has never had an outing yet, and I don't want the boy to feel himself quite neglected."

"It's his own fault," said Mrs. Foster, "if he does ; he starts off directly after dinner every Sunday, to

drink tea with Tom and his mother ; it's letting him down to be always associating with your shopman."

"And they're always going to church or chapel, or talking religion, I dare say," said Fanny with a laugh.

"Well," said her father, a little conscience smitten, "Tom's a good fellow, and his religion won't hurt Harry. However, I'll ask the boy to go with us to-day ; the ride will do him good."

Harry was just then longing for a change, and the offer of his uncle was eagerly accepted.

Again on the following Sunday he accompanied his uncle, aunt, and cousins by train, and they came home late and tired, Harry becoming angry and offended with Ann next morning, because she teased him about being lazy and keeping Tom at the door. In the shop he was careless in performing his duties, and so listless and inattentive when spoken to by his uncle, that he received and merited a sharp reprimand. Altogether it was a miserable day, and Harry went to his bedroom at night sulky and out of temper.

"I won't be apprenticed to uncle," he said to himself ; "it's a horrid dirty business, and I'm sure the house is miserable ; everybody's untidy till Sunday comes, and then the mourning they wear for my poor father's so fine, with all those beads shining, that the girls don't look like the same."

But with this reference to his dead father came the memory of his words about the rules for business in the Bible.

"I've only read five or six chapters in Matthew,"


said the boy to himself, "and I've been here a month ; I shall never find those rules at this rate, and I'm too tired when I go to bed to read a chapter, or even to say my prayers. I must get away from here soon ; mother wouldn't let me be 'prenticed to uncle, I'm sure, if she knew all."

The boy turned over the leaves of the Bible as he thus reflected, with a kind of superstitious idea that the texts spoken of by his father might present themselves.

"I know I haven't asked God to help me," said the boy, as he turned from the holy book. "I'm getting so wicked, I'm afraid He won't listen to me, but I think I will try." Kneeling by his bed, the well-trained boy repeated his usual evening prayer, and then added, "Pray God, for Christ's sake, show me where to find the Bible rules for business. Amen."

CHAPTER V.

THE PRAYER ANSWERED.

T the balcony window of a house in Park Lane, overlooking Hyde Park, stood a lady and a young girl of twelve.

"There he goes, mamma," said the child ; " that's the boy I mean ;" and as she spoke she entered the balcony, and pointed to a youth carrying a grocer's basket. " I'm sure it's Harry Foster, mamma. I saw him with his mother as the funeral passed. You remember when Uncle Helmsley was one of the pall-bearers of John Foster's coffin, and all his workmen followed ?"

Lady Fanshaw joined her little daughter on the balcony, and looking in the direction she pointed out, saw a tall, noble-looking boy walking lazily up Park Lane towards Oxford Street, swinging his empty basket, and whistling as he went.

Lady Fanshaw re-entered the drawing-room, and rang the bell.

" Tell cook I want her," was the order that sent the footman downstairs wondering.

Sir Thomas Fanshaw was a retired naval officer, but not rich enough to keep up a large staff of servants. Mrs. Ward occupied the position of cook and housekeeper in his house, assisted by a kitchen-maid.

Mrs. Ward was not unaccustomed to discussions with her mistress, who had every confidence in her, and well she deserved the trust.

The message brought by the footman, "My Lady wants you, Mrs. Ward," although it took her by surprise, was quickly attended to. Turning down her sleeves, and exchanging a coarse apron for a muslin one, she hastened to present herself in the drawing-room.

"Did you want me, my Lady?" she asked, as in reply to her knock she heard the words, "Come in."

"Yes, Mrs. Ward, sit down for a few minutes while I talk to you. Has Foster, the grocer, engaged a new shop-boy?"

"Oh, no, my Lady; there is a new boy, but it's Mr. Foster's nephew, and he's going to be 'prenticed to his uncle by-and-by."

"Doesn't he bring the things from the shop sometimes, cook?" asked the young lady.

"Yes, Miss Ethel; he was here just now with the goods I ordered yesterday."

"And you find no fault with the articles, cook?"

"No, my Lady. Foster do keep good articles; but I think he's getting in a bad way about money.

He's not a good manager, my Lady, and there's waste and extravagance in the house."

"You must not listen to gossip," said Lady Fanshaw ; "what you have heard may be partly true and partly false."

"I don't know, my Lady, about that ; but Ann's mother told me 'twas a miserable house, although there's plenty to eat."

"Well, keep what you've heard to yourself, cook," said her mistress.

"So I will, my Lady ; and I've not mentioned it to any one but you, my Lady ; and I shouldn't have done that, only your Ladyship seemed anxious about Foster's nephew. The boy's altered already, my Lady. I declare he looked like a young gentleman when I first saw him. And Neal says he goes out with his uncle and the family on Sundays, for he saw him pass down Park Lane a few Sundays ago with them in a double shay."

"And you are sure this boy is Foster's nephew?"

"Yes, my Lady ; Foster told me himself that the boy was the son of his brother who died six months ago."

"Then it is the same, mamma," exclaimed Ethel. "You know I was staying at Uncle Helmsley's in May, and it was John Foster's funeral I saw."

"I believe it is the same boy, Ethel," said Lady Fanshaw. "And I want you, cook, please, when the boy brings goods again from the shop, to keep him, and let me know. And now I need not detain you

any longer ; it must be nearly the servants' dinner-hour."

"Yes, it is, my Lady, thank you," said cook, as she rose to leave ; "and I'll remember to keep young Foster for you to see next time he comes."

"Mamma," said Ethel, after Mrs. Ward had left, "do you think Foster's house is a good place for John Foster's son ? Uncle and aunt used to say his father was such a good man, and I don't think they are good people at his uncle's."

"Perhaps not, my dear," said her mother ; "but we must wait patiently."

Mrs. Ward, whose interest in Harry Foster was greatly increased by the inquiries of her mistress, contrived to go to Foster's shop early the next morning, and order a few articles which might have waited till next week. She was not a little curious as to the cause of Lady Fanshaw's notice of the boy, and her reasons for wishing to see him. "Please send those things as early as you can, Mr. Foster," she said as she left the shop.

Harry was absent on this occasion on an errand, and his uncle's first words as the boy entered the shop showed at once that he and his uncle were not on the best terms.

"You've been gone nearly an hour with those goods. Look here, boy, I'll keep no idle young vagabonds about me to waste their time in the streets."

A scowl, followed by a look of defiance, passed over the once bright face of Ellen's boy as he said,—

"Mother didn't send me here to be an errand boy."

"You'll just do what I tell you, youngster. Your father was ready enough for you to come when I offered to take you without a premium, and feed and clothe you, and you'll earn your living as I please. You're getting lazy, sir, and it won't do."

Harry Foster felt such a rush of anger against his uncle at this moment, that he was about to utter words he would have been sorry for afterwards ; but happening to cast a glance at Tom, who stood busy and silent behind the counter, he caught a look of sorrow and caution on the plain, homely face, which checked him in a moment.

"Jist help me a bit, Harry," said the honest shopman ; " I'm all behindhands."

Without a word the boy joined his humble friend behind the counter, and was soon as busy as he packing up pounds and half-pounds of moist sugar.

Mr. Foster sauntered out of the shop to the parlour.

"What, dinner !" he exclaimed, as he saw the cloth on the table. "How's that ? Why it's not more than half-past one."

"Well, the girls are going out this afternoon with the Parkers, and they wanted dinner early."

"Where are they going ? I don't much like those Parker girls, Maria."

"It's all right. Mrs. Parker and one of the sons are going with them to the Crystal Palace ; they can't

hurt there. But George, don't say a word about it, or Harry will want to go ; he's always talking about the Palace, and he's never been there ; but the girls don't want him."

These incidents, which occurred on the day of Mrs. Ward's visit to Foster's shop, will prove, not only that Harry had been injured by evil example, but that his uncle's family, for some reason, disliked his company.

The boy was as silent and reserved at dinner that day as his aunt and cousins ; and when he left to send Tom in and to take his place, Mrs. Foster remarked,—

"How sulky Harry looks ! Do you think he knows anything about the visit to the Palace ?"

"No, not he ; the boy's sulky because I scolded him."

The appearance of Tom silenced the speakers.

Harry was not, however, really sulky, but suffering from an attack of conscience. "You are not following your father's advice, nor remembering his teachings," said the gentle voice. "You know you did waste time on your road to-day, and your temper is getting dreadful." It was no use to say to conscience, "Uncle provokes me ; and he calls me lazy and idle, when they're all lazy together." "It may be so," was the reply ; "but that's nothing to do with you, who have been taught so well. Ah ! you know what's the cause ; you've given up reading a chapter every day ; and don't you often get up and go to bed without

even thinking of your prayers?" "I know it's all true," said the boy to himself, "but how can I help it in a house like this?" "Tom does," said conscience. "See how good and patient he is; and don't forget what he said to you this morning."

Harry remembered the young man's words, golden, though uttered in ungrammatical phraseology. "I say, now, Harry, looky 'ere. I'm sure if yer good father had a yeard your sauce to yer uncle yesterday, it would ha' made him unhappy even up in heaven."

"But I didn't answer uncle the second time, Tom."

"No, because I looked at yer to make yer remember what yer father had a-taught yer; and then there's yer mother too, as writes such letters about doing yer duty and all that."

Alone in the shop while Tom had his dinner, these words of the shopman returned to his memory, rousing conscience to condemn him as we have seen.

"I shall never do right," said the boy to himself, "till I find those Bible rules about business. I asked Tom once, and he said there were lots, but he couldn't tell me where to find them exactly. Ah! but I never tried, and I don't think I ever shall do right, so it's no use trying."

Harry had forgotten his father's words, "Take all your troubles to God: nothing is too trifling to tell Him in prayer."

The boy was, however, subdued by these thoughts; and his uncle, feeling a little ashamed of his wife's objection to his accompanying his cousins to the

Crystal Palace, spoke to him kindly as he entered the shop.

"Harry, there are some more articles to go to Sir Thomas Fanshaw's this afternoon; don't forget to take them."

"No, uncle, I won't," replied the boy.

Now, although George Foster knew that he owed the good custom of Sir Thomas to the recommendation of his brother's master, he was quite unaware that Lady Fanshaw and Mrs. Helmsley were sisters. Neither had Harry any idea that such was the fact. Therefore, when he presented himself at the servant's entrance at Park Lane, Mrs. Ward's behaviour surprised him.

One habit of his training he still adhered to. He always washed his face and hands, and brushed his hair after dinner, and this being fortunately the day for a clean collar, the boy's appearance quite satisfied Mrs. Ward.

"Come in, my man," she said, "and give me your basket. Are all these things for me?" she asked, as with a surprised and blushing face he entered the to him wonderful kitchen.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied.

"Ah, well, that's all right. Sit down while I go up to mistress; the ladies want to speak to you."

Quite scared, and almost inclined to run away, Harry sat and waited. The kitchenmaid and one or two other servants came in, and one of them asked whom he wanted.

"Mrs. Ward told me to wait here," he replied, while the colour deepened on his cheeks, rendering him more like the fair blue-eyed country youth Mrs. Ward had first seen.

Such were her thoughts as she now entered the kitchen and said,—

"Come upstairs; my Lady wishes to see you, Harry Foster."

More than ever surprised, Harry rose, and, cap in hand, followed Mrs. Ward through halls and up stair-cases that awed him by their grandeur, to a door which, after knocking at, she opened, and ushered the boy into a spacious and elegant drawing-room overlooking the Park.

"Here's Harry Foster, my Lady," said Mrs. Ward; and the boy, who had recovered his surprise, recalled the teaching of his mother respecting proper behaviour to ladies. He stepped forward and made a low bow.

"You need not wait, Mrs. Ward," said Lady Fanshaw; "the boy will find his way downstairs, no doubt."

Mrs. Ward left the room rather curious, but satisfied that she should find it all out in time.

"Come nearer, my boy," said the lady; "I want to ask you a few questions."

Harry approached the sofa on which Lady Fanshaw sat, and then she asked,—

"Is your name Henry Foster?"

"Yes, ma'am." He had heard Mrs. Ward say

"My Lady," but he was afraid to attempt it himself.

"And Mr. Foster, the grocer, is your uncle?"

"Yes, ma'am; he's my father's brother; his name was John Foster; he died last May."

Ethel Fanshaw had been allowed to remain in the room on condition that she should be silent; but at Harry's last words she looked at her mother, and with difficulty refrained from speaking.

"Where was your father working before his death?"

"At the mills, Mr. Helmsley's, ma'am," replied the boy. "My father was foreman there for ten years, and Mr. Helmsley had such a funeral for him, almost all the men followed when he was buried."

"Mamma," said Ethel, with the daring of an indulged and only daughter, "do let me speak; I know it's the same boy. I saw that funeral," added the young lady, addressing Harry, "and you were there, walking with the widow, and she must have been your mother."

Harry turned his face to the young lady, and said in a tone of surprise,—

"Yes, Miss, I was there with mother; but how could you see me?"

"Oh, easily enough; I was standing at the window of my uncle's house, with my aunt Helmsley, mamma's sister, and she told me all about your father, how good he was, and so clever in the business."

"My dear Ethel," said Lady Fanshaw, "you are quite confusing the poor boy;" and then with a

smile she turned to Harry, and said, "We have found out what we wanted, Henry Foster: I heard you were with Mr. George Foster, and as I knew your father and mother before they were married, I wished to see you and to ascertain if you were really the son of John and Ellen Foster, who lived at my brother-in-law's mills."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, indeed I am their child. And please is Mrs. Helmsley your sister, ma'am? Oh, I wish I was back again at the mills, or with grandfather at Rose Farm."

"Are you not happy at your uncle's?" asked the lady.

"Perhaps I ought to be, ma'am, but I don't think I am doing my duty there as I ought, and that makes me very unhappy."

"But why is this, my boy?" asked the lady. "I am sure your father and mother must have taught you the right way to do your duty; not only to please those who employ you, but as in the sight of God, and to please Him."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, they did indeed," said the boy; "my father, when he was dying, told me what to do, and said there were Bible rules for people in business, but he wasn't sensible long enough to tell me where to find those rules."

"And have you searched for them, Harry?"

"No, ma'am," said the boy, dropping his eyelids and looking ashamed. "I meant to read a chapter every day, and my father told me I could ask God

for help in the most trifling things, but I've only done so once or twice. Oh, ma'am, it's so hard to be religious at my uncle's. There are no prayers of a night and morning, and they never go to church; and I believe I'm getting very wicked, for I've been taught better; and if it hadn't been for Tom, the shopman, I should have been worse, for he's very good."

"And these rules about business, Harry, have you ever asked God to show you where to find them?" said Lady Fanshaw, concealing her emotion.

"Once, ma'am, a long time ago, but it all went out of my head since then."

"Well, Harry, I think He has answered your prayer by sending you here. I can tell you where to find those Bible rules."

"Oh, ma'am! oh, can you? Please me what the chapters are, and I'll search for them to-night, I will indeed."

"I would rather you should depend upon yourself, my child," said the lady; "but I will tell you so far, that one of them, the very best, is in one of St. Paul's Epistles, and another in the Proverbs. And now I must send you home, or your uncle will think you are wasting your time."


"May I tell him I've been here, ma'am?"

"Certainly, my boy; tell him whatever you like, and ask him to allow you to come here on Sunday afternoon, at half-past four o'clock, to drink tea with Mrs. Ward."

"Thank you, ma'am, so much ; and I'm sure uncle will let me come when you're so kind as to ask me." And Harry, as he reached the door, pleased the ladies greatly by taking up his cap which lay on a chair, and bowing low to each as he said, "Good afternoon, ma'am, Good afternoon, miss," in a tone of gladness and respect.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VISIT TO MRS. WARD.

“ELL, you have taken your time now, youngster; it's just an hour since you left this house.”

“Yes, uncle, I know; but Mrs. Ward told me to come in, because Lady Fanshaw wanted to speak to me.”

“To speak to you!” exclaimed George Foster. “What about pray?” and a consciousness of circumstances of which his nephew was ignorant made him flush deeply as he spoke.

“It was about myself, uncle. Lady Fanshaw knew my father, and she wanted to find out if I was his son; and the young lady with long curls saw my poor father's funeral, and me walking with mother, from Mr. Helmsley's window.”

“What, at Mill House? How came she there?”

“She was staying with her aunt, Mrs. Helmsley.”

“What do you mean, boy? How can Mrs. Helmsley be Miss Fanshaw's aunt?”

“Because she's Lady Fanshaw's sister, uncle. And

the lady was so kind ; and I'm to go there on Sunday to drink tea with Mrs. Ward, if you'll let me."

"Of course I'll let you," said his uncle ; "and now don't waste any more time ; Tom will find you something to do ;" and George Foster turned and entered the parlour as he spoke.

Harry seemed filled with new energy, and attended so briskly to some customers who entered the shop, that Tom looked at him with astonishment. As soon as they were alone he said,—

"Why, Harry, you're as brisk as a bee. What have the grandees been a saying to yer ?"

"Oh, Tom, I wish you'd been there. Oh, it's such a grand house—much grander than Mr. Helmsley's, and that's ever so big. And then the drawing-room ; and there was Lady Fanshaw on the sofa near the fire, and a little girl with dark curls, like my mother's hair, not like mine."

"And that's the young lady as saw you at the funeral, is it ?" said Tom.

"Yes, Tom. But I was so stupid. I heard Mrs. Ward say 'My Lady' to Lady Fanshaw, and I didn't like to say it, but kept calling her 'ma'am' ; I hope she won't think I was rude."

"Not she ; Lady Fanshaw's out and out a lady, and she'll understand."

Meanwhile George Foster and his wife were discussing Harry's visit to Lady Fanshaw's.

"By all means let the boy go, George ; they're sure to do something for him, and then you'll be able to

look out for an apprentice with money. You've had £100 premium with two 'prentices, and you ought to get £150 now."

"Well, I do want money now, and no mistake. Mine's a good business, quite at the West End too, and it's a pity it should go to ruin for the want of a little more capital ; so I'll wait till Sunday, and see what the Fanshaws are going to do, and then I'll advertise for a 'prentice."

"I shan't be sorry," said Mrs. Foster. "I don't like the boy ; he's so stuck up, and marching about the house so spick and span ; and then having his breakfast in the kitchen because he's up early. I believe he thinks me and the girls are dreadful creatures because we get up late, and wear our oldest dresses in the house when nobody sees us. What does it matter to a boy like that, I wonder ?"

"Ah, well, Maria, he's my dead brother's boy, and I shall be only too glad if the Fanshaws take him up. Let's have tea soon, my dear," he added, as he re-entered the shop, and opening his desk, he took out the account books kept so correctly by Tom, and examined his position as debtor and creditor with great anxiety.

"I must have £150 soon from somewhere," he said to himself. "Tom keeps the books first-rate ; I wonder he doesn't speak better grammar. Ah, perhaps if we did get up earlier, and there was better management and less waste in the house, we should be all right, for the business is a very good one. I used to

think that religion had nothing to do with business, though poor John used to say it had. His boy's got some notion of it too, I can see that ; and as for Tom, if it's religion that makes him a good and honest servant, it's a pity we ain't some of us more like him."

The week passed, and Harry appeared at dinner on Sunday most carefully dressed in his best clothes, with a clean shirt-front and collar and a neatly-tied necktie.

Mrs. Foster and the girls were looking ill at ease. They were attired in stylish slight mourning, and before Harry appeared had been told by George Foster that for once they must be satisfied with a walk, as he had no money for any more outings.

The subject was dropped during dinner, but when Harry asked permission to leave the table, his uncle said,—

"It's too soon to go to the Fanshaws', Harry."

"Yes, uncle, I know ; but I'm going to the Sunday-school this afternoon with Tom."

"All right, boy ; you can go if you like, you know that ; and much good may it do you."

Glad to be free from an invitation from his uncle, Harry went up the stairs two at a time.

"There he goes to wash his hands and brush his hair," said his aunt. "I'm sure there's no religion in all those finikin ways."

Quite ignorant of his aunt's opinion, Harry in a few minutes was heard to leave the house. The next hour he spent at the Sunday-school with Tom, who in spite of his grammar had a class of boys, who no doubt

understood him better as he spoke on the best subjects in their own vernacular, than they would have done a more grammatical speaker.

Harry, as he had often done before, listened to Tom's teachings with the greatest interest.

The boys were repeating the texts on their reward-tickets, and upon each of these Tom made some comment to impress the subject on the memory. "Idleness covereth a man with rags," repeated one boy.

"In course it does," said Tom. "If a chap's idle and won't work, how's he to get any tin? And can any on yer get clothes without money? No; and so you wears yer old clothes till they're in rags, because ye're too idle to mend 'em. Why, boys, I could sew on a button and mend a tear in my jacket long afore I was as big as any o' you."

No wonder that homely Tom's class understood him. Mrs. Foster would no doubt have laughed at the idea of Harry going home to Tom's apartments to wash and brush again; but not to be clean and neat when visiting at such a house as Lady Fanshaw's would have horrified him.

He presented himself at the kitchen entrance punctually at the appointed time, and after answering the good-natured housemaid's questions, and being joked by the footman, he was led to a pleasant room, in which stood the most tempting tea-table, and besides Mrs. Ward, a very smart young girl who was lady's maid to Lady Fanshaw. The curiosity of Mrs. Ward

was quickly satisfied. Harry, during tea-time, lost his shyness : there was no resisting the kindness of the two head servants of Sir Thomas Fanshaw ; and they both very soon knew all about Harry Foster's father and mother, and that the brother-in-law of Lady Fanshaw had been the master and friend of Harry's parents.

All that has been described respecting them in the previous chapter of this story was related by the boy to his interested listeners, till long after the tea-things had been removed.

Meanwhile, in the drawing-room of the house, the same subject was being discussed. Dinner at two on Sundays, instead of six, to relieve the servants, was the custom at Sir Thomas's. Therefore, at six o'clock, on the day of Harry's visit, Ethel, to her great delight, was drinking tea with her parents in the drawing-room. Sir Thomas sat in an easy-chair by the fire, and, as usual, she was ready to carry her father his tea and wait upon him in every way. The violet silk dress, trimmed with white lace, suited the brunette shoulders and arms, which looked even fair beneath the long dark curls that fell around them, while the likeness to her father, as she flitted backwards and forwards from the table to his chair, could be clearly traced. The same round face and irregular features were lighted up by the brilliant dark eyes and eyebrows. Sir Thomas Fanshaw's hair had become quite grey, but it was easy to believe, from the dark eyebrows, that in youth it had been of raven blackness.

When Neal, the man-servant, brought in a plate of

toast, Lady Fanshaw inquired, "Is young Foster here, Neal?"

"Yes, my Lady; he's been having tea with Mrs. Ward."

"Well, send him up here in half an hour," she replied; "or at least when the tea-things are removed."

Promising to do so, Neal left the room, and then Sir Thomas asked—

"Who is young Foster, my dear?"

"The child of Edward's favourite foreman," she replied; "the man who was followed to the grave by nearly all the workmen at the mills."

"Yes, papa; and I saw the boy that's downstairs, walking with his poor mother at the funeral."

"I remember the man, John Foster—a first-rate fellow to work; he was a great loss to Helmsley. But how came his boy here?"

"His father's brother, George Foster, who keeps a grocery and general shop in Orchard Street, offered to take this boy as an apprentice; and Mrs. Ward, who saw him in the shop one day, heard from his uncle all particulars."

"And I saw him, papa, when he brought the things from his uncle's, and I knew him directly; and when he came again, mamma sent for him upstairs, and found out that it was John Foster's son."

"And is that the reason he is here to-day, Caroline?" asked Sir Thomas of Lady Fanshaw.

"Yes," she replied. "I want you to see the boy. The fact is, I know George Foster's house is a

very unsuitable place for John Foster's son. They are people of no religious principles : I have heard that they never attend a place of worship, and Mrs. Ward tells me Foster is in debt, and that the business is kept up by that homely shopman, who has been there from a boy."

"Are the boy's indentures made out yet?" asked Sir Thomas.

"No : it was arranged that he should live with his uncle for six months, to learn what he could of the business, and to discover whether the apprenticeship would be agreeable on both sides."

Lady Fanshaw then related to Sir Thomas what had passed between herself and the boy on religious subjects : how he had spoken of having forgotten his father's teaching, and that he knew he was getting wicked. "Of course he is but a child of fourteen," continued the lady, "and if the example set in his uncle's house is a bad one, it is not surprising that the boy should be led to imitate it."

"Ring the bell, Ethel, to have the tea-things removed," said Sir Thomas, after a pause. "I'll see this boy. We'll save John Foster's child, with God's help, if we can."

The housemaid answered the ring, and after clearing the table, she said,—

"Neal told me to send up young Foster to you, my Lady ; when shall he come ?"

"Now, at once, Harris : come up with him, and show him the way."

In a few moments the door opened, and as the girl held it back, Henry Foster walked in and bowed to the group near the fire, which formed a scene he never forgot.

The rich heavy curtains covering the windows, the bright colours of the table-cover, chair-covers, and carpet, lighted up by the many burners of the cut-glass gaselier and a blazing fire, gave to the room a glow of light and warmth. The white-haired gentleman in the arm-chair, and opposite to him, seated on a sofa covered with the same warm colour as the chairs, Lady Fanshaw and the little girl in a beautiful dress, who had first noticed him at his father's funeral, presented to the boy a fairy picture that made him say to himself, "If I live to be a man, I'll have a house like this. I hope it isn't wicked to be rich."

Lady Fanshaw dispersed these thoughts by saying, "Come nearer, Henry Foster ; Sir Thomas wants to talk to you."

Harry advanced and bowing to the white-haired gentleman, stood respectfully near his chair, feeling very glad that the housemaid had asked him if he would like to wash his hands and brush his hair before going upstairs.

Sir Thomas looked keenly at the bright intelligent face and clear blue eyes, and then said,—

"Well, my boy, you've come to London to make your fortune, I suppose?"

"I don't think I'm clever enough to do that, sir, but I should like to try."

Lady Fanshaw smiled as she said, "Have you found the Bible rules for being successful in business, Henry?"

"No, my Lady," replied the boy; "but I think I remember my father's rules, and I'm sure he took them from the Bible."

"And what were these rules of your father's, boy?" asked Sir Thomas.

"One was getting up early, and keeping oneself neat, and taking care of everything, and never being wasteful."

"And are you able to follow these rules, Henry, at your uncle's?" asked Lady Fanshaw.

"No, my Lady," said the boy, "not always; but it's my own fault, and I ought to know better."

Passing over Henry's self-accusation, Sir Thomas asked,—

"Are your indentures with your uncle signed, boy?"

"No, sir! I shan't have been with uncle for six months till March, and then, if I like, I am to be apprenticed for three years."

"And *do* you like it?" asked Sir Thomas; "or would you like any other business, or any other master?"

"Uncle's my father's brother, and he's always been kind to me, sir," said poor Henry, timidly; "and if he wants me to stay, I'm afraid I must."

"And you would be glad to go somewhere else if he does not want you to stay? Speak out, boy; don't be afraid."

"I should not like to be my uncle's apprentice, sir, indeed I should not, if there was another place for me."

Sir Thomas paused for a few moments, and glanced at his wife; he knew what she wished, and then he said,—

"Now look here, lad, I don't approve of boys changing their situations because there are some things unpleasant. You know the old proverb, 'A rolling stone gathers no moss.' However, if at the end of the six months you do not wish to be apprenticed to your uncle, come and tell Lady Fanshaw, and she will know what to do."

"Thank you, sir," said the boy; "and I'll do my best while I'm at my uncle's, I will indeed."

"I believe you will, Henry," said Lady Fanshaw, addressing the boy; "but there is something else I want you to do. Look through as many chapters of the book of Proverbs and the Epistles as you can find time for, and try to find that containing your father's rules about business. Will you promise me that, Henry Foster?"

"I will, my Lady, indeed I will," said the boy.

"But," said the kind lady, "you have promised Sir Thomas and you have promised me to attend to our wishes for your welfare; now can you keep that promise in your own strength?"

"No, my Lady; father used to tell me that, and he often said that nothing was too small or too trifling to ask God about in our prayers. I know I've forgotten


to do this at uncle's, but I'll pray to God to-night to make me remember."

"That is right, my boy," said Lady Fanshaw. "Your father would never have been such a good man or so respected if he had not remembered that 'God is the hearer and answerer of prayer.' Now go home quietly, and think of all we have talked about, Henry ; and if they laugh at you at your uncle's, try to bear it without being offended. Show him the way down, Ethel," continued Lady Fanshaw, as the boy again bowed and turned to leave the room.

"No, thank you, Miss," said Harry, hastily ; "I can find my way. I will not give you so much trouble." And with another bow he descended the stairs, and without waiting to see Mrs. Ward, hastened home. Not for worlds could he have allowed such a fairy vision as Ethel Fanshaw to trouble herself about him.

CHAPTER VII.

ROSE FARM IN SPRING.

NE month only remained of Henry Foster's probation on the Sunday evening described in the last chapter. During that six months of winter he had seen nothing of the "old folks at home," and although his mother had written frequently, his own letters had been few and far between.

As the time approached for the boy to be apprenticed, Ellen Foster wrote anxiously to her brother-in-law, asking his opinion of her boy's fitness for the business, and whether they were mutually pleased with each other.

The country round Rose Farm was assuming the appearance of spring, in spite of March winds, one morning a week after Ellen Foster had sent her letter. A letter to Mrs. J. Foster lay on the breakfast table, with the seal broken, when the old farmer came in to join his daughter at breakfast.

"A London letter, Nell, I can see," he said, as he glanced at the envelope ; "I suppose you've read it."

"Yes, father," she replied, "but I want you to hear its contents, and give me your opinion."

"I don't understand them Lunnun folk," replied the old man ; "but when you've had your breakfast, I'll listen to it : I suppose it's from George, about the boy ; there's nothing wrong, is there ?"

"Oh, no ! George speaks very well of him ; but have your breakfast first, father."

This meal at a farm-house never takes long. The adage, "Quick at meat, quick at work," is generally carried out. Before long, therefore, Ellen took up her brother-in-law's letter, and read it aloud.

"ORCHARD STREET, *March 25th.*

"DEAR ELLEN,—I received your letter, but I couldn't write sooner because I was waiting for Sir Thomas Fanshaw's answer. Sir Thomas sent for me one day, to know if I meant to take Harry as a 'prentice, and he asked me if I thought he liked the business ; so I told him I didn't think your boy cared for my business at all ; and then Sir Thomas said he thought he could get Harry apprenticed to another business, and that Lady Fanshaw, who is Mrs. Helmsley's sister, had taken quite a fancy to him. Of course I was glad to hear this, so I told Sir Thomas the truth. You know, dear Ellen, I promised poor John, when he was in the hospital, that I would make his boy my apprentice, and take care of him ; but he's better off if Lady Fanshaw or Sir Thomas can get him into a City house, and I think they will ; and if they do, Harry's fortune is made. And then there's another reason, but I never would have spoken of it if there

hadn't been a better chance for Harry ; now I can advertise, and get £150 premium for an apprentice, which will be a great help to me just now when I'm really wanting money very bad. I don't know whether Harry's got the appointment for certain, but he's gone to the City about it to-day ; so I'll keep this letter open till he comes home. Maria and the girls send their love.

“Your affectionate brother, GEORGE.

“P.S.—Harry has got the situation, and is to go next week ; and as he wants to see his mammy, I'll give him the money to travel to Colchester to-morrow.”

“Why, my girl,” said the farmer, “this is the best news I've heard for many a day ; why, to have such a friend as Lady Fanshaw and her husband would be the making of any lad.”

“Yes ; but, father, where's Harry to live when he leaves his uncle ? He's too young to be in lodgings by himself in London. It must have been like home with his aunt and cousins. All this makes me feel very anxious.”

“Well, the boy will be here to-day no doubt, Ellen, so don't worry yourself till you hear what he says. Don't meet troubles half-way, girl.”

“I declare I quite forgot he was coming so soon, and his room not ready. Dear boy, of course we shall hear all about it from him by-and-by.”

Meanwhile Harry was speeding along in the train, almost fancying himself in a dream. He had got a new engagement, and he was going home to see his mother and grandfather at Rose Farm : was it not too good to be true ?

Ellen found plenty to do before dinner, so that anxious thought was banished. She did not, however, expect her boy till the afternoon ; therefore, when a cab from Colchester drove up to the rose-covered porch just before dinner, Ellen Foster was quite unprepared to see a tall youth spring out and rush into the house, crying, "Mother, mother, here I am."

"My boy, how you've grown !" she exclaimed, as Harry, now so much taller than herself, clasped her in his arms ; and then he turned to his grandfather, who came forward to welcome him warmly.

"You've grown, sure enough, youngster," said the old man, "but Lunnun has stole away your country colour."

"People don't have colours in London, grandfather, and I'm quite well, and so hungry."

"All right, Harry," said his mother ; "you're just in time for dinner, so take your carpet-bag upstairs. I know you'll like a wash after your journey."

At the dinner table, but few questions were asked about the change of his position in London, yet Ellen Foster heard enough of the idleness, late rising, and untidy habits at her brother-in-law's, to feel satisfied it was not the proper place for John Foster's son.

The afternoon Harry spent in roaming about the

farm, and renewing his acquaintance with Lilly and Snow, the two cows, and old Rattler, the horse, while Joe, the shepherd's dog, and Hero, the black retriever, followed him in high glee. It was not till after tea in the old farm kitchen, when the early spring day closed in, and the cold evening made the burning logs on the hearth most acceptable, that Harry could find time to explain the cause of his parting from his uncle.

"I'm not sorry you have left Orchard Street, Harry," said his mother, "after what you wrote to me about the doings, especially on a Sunday."

"I knew you wouldn't like it, mother, and I was beginning to feel uncomfortable; so I knew March was soon coming; and then Lady Fanshaw sent for me, to find out who I was; and, mother, I was so surprised when she told me Mrs. Helmsley was her sister."

"I dare say you were; but tell us all about it, Harry; I couldn't quite understand your letters."

Nothing loth, Harry began, as he said, from the beginning; how Mrs. Ward the housekeeper, had sent him upstairs to Lady Fanshaw, and all that passed there, with which the reader is acquainted, as well as on the day he drank tea with Mrs. Ward, and was examined by Sir Thomas. "And, mother, only think," added Harry, "it was all through that pretty little girl, Miss Fanshaw; she saw me one day when I carried some articles to the house, and told her mamma she had seen me with you at poor father's funeral, and so it all came out."

"Well, boy, and what trade are you going to be arter all?" said his grandfather.

"It isn't a trade exactly, grandfather, but a wholesale stationer's in the City; one of those places where they keep heaps of things in a warehouse, and sell them to shopkeepers; but there's no shop, only an office, and I'm going to be one of the clerks."

"And you like that better than weighing out tea and sugar, and grinding coffee, I 'spose, boy?"

"Yes, that I do, a jolly lot better; I've got to be at the office by nine, and leave at six, but there will be heaps to do while I'm there."

"But Harry," said his mother, "Sir Thomas Fanshaw is a naval officer; how could he get a place like this for you?"

"Mother, Sir Thomas hadn't much to do with it; for Lady Fanshaw wrote to her sister, Mrs. Helmsley, and she told poor father's old governor all about it; so it's through them all that I've got such good luck."

"So you thinks yourself lucky, my boy?"

"I oughtn't to say lucky, grandfather," he replied; "for Lady Fanshaw said one day that God ordered everything in heaven and earth, and that my father had trusted in the command and promise made by God, when He says, 'Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive.' Oh, mother, she is such a good lady; she took me with her in the carriage to see my new governor, and she talked like this all the way."

"But, Harry," said his mother, "I can't bear to

think of your living in lodgings by yourself in London where there's so many bad people ; with your uncle, you had a home and relations to take care of you."

"I know, mother," said the boy, "and I don't like to speak against uncle and aunt ; but I'm sure they didn't care where I went or what I did, so long as I did my work every day in the shop. I don't think aunt liked me much ; and it used sometimes to make me feel that I didn't care, and that I'd be idle and untidy like they were ; and I think I should, if it hadn't been for Tom."

"Ah, yes ; you told me you went to chapel with the shopman, and drank tea at his apartments, with him and his mother on a Sunday."

"Yes, mother, I did at first, till uncle one Sunday asked me to go with him in a double chaise, and after that I went two or three times, and we used to stop at taverns to have something warm as we were coming home, because it was cold weather then and late."

"What, spirits, Harry ?"

"Yes, mother, and they made me take some ; and then on the Monday I was miserable, and uncle often had a row with me ; but after I'd seen Lady Fanshaw, she made me think of poor father, and those Bible rules about business he spoke about on the day he was dying. I never should have found them if it hadn't been for Lady Fanshaw ; she told me to search in the book of Proverbs, and the Epistles, and to read a chapter every day, and pray to God to help me, but I didn't find one."

"Ah, Harry," said his mother, "your dear father taught me those business rules long ago, but I don't think I could tell you where to find them. But we're forgetting about Tom; is he shopman still at your uncle's?"

"Yes, mother; he's been there ever since uncle opened shop, and he is more the manager than uncle; he often goes to market, and he keeps all the accounts and the books, and uncle says he could trust him with untold gold; and he's only twenty, and very plain and common-looking, and speaks such queer London talk: but he's very good, and he would often tell me of it when I did wrong; and, mother, I know I shall be safe in London, for I'm going to have a bed in Tom's room, and live with him and his mother."

"Oh," said Ellen, greatly relieved, "Tom's mother is still living then?"

"Yes; and she's got a sewing machine, and does needlework. Mrs. Ford hasn't had much education, mother, but she's very good; and I'm sure she knows about God and the Lord Jesus, just like poor father did. And you should hear how she tells God everything when she has prayer at night. I've heard her on a Sunday evening often, for I used to stay till the last thing, and Tom always went home with me. There was never any family prayer at Uncle George's."

Ellen remained silent from mingled emotions—a consciousness that she had not the faith to believe that God would listen if she told Him everything, and a feeling of thankfulness at the thought that her son

was going to live with a woman who possessed that faith.

"And what are you going to pay these kind people for your lodging, boy?" asked his grandfather.

"Nothing for the first twelve months," said Harry, "because I'm only to have five shillings a week at first, and Lady Fanshaw's going to pay them for me. Oh, mother," he continued, "you can't think how she pleased Mrs. Ford. She called upon her in her carriage, and made all the arrangements for me to live with them, and I'm sure she's promised to pay them well. I shall have my dinner in the City, and spend Sunday with Tom and his mother. They live in a very respectable street near Oxford Street, so I can go by the omnibus if it's wet; but it's nothing of a walk to the City for me."

Harry at last began to feel tired, and was glad to lay his head on a pillow fragrant with cleanliness and lavender, instead of London smoke and the other unpleasant consequences of neglect and dirt.

Harry's week at the farm passed rapidly, but pleasantly. In spite of the cold east winds, he spent most of his time out of doors; for April was close at hand, and birds and blossoms were heralding her approach.

On Sunday, Harry and his mother took some cold meat and bread with them, and started early, to be in time for the Wesleyan chapel service, the old farmer accompanying them.

"I can't stay for the afternoon service at the

church," said the old man, as they walked along on the hard road in the spring sunshine. "My old legs will want rest after the walk home."

"Yes, and a good dinner too, grandfather," said the boy. "Mother and I are young—we can rough it; and I want to go to church with mother to-day. Poor father liked the Church prayers, and I'm sure that good Church people and good Dissenters are just the same; Tom Ford says so, and he often went to the Baker Street Church with me to hear such a good man who preaches there."

"Ah, boy," said his grandfather, "when we come to die, we shan't have to be asked whether we're Church people or Dissenters; only to be sure we are Christians, who believe that Christ died for us."

The day came at last for Harry to leave the bright April sky and country air for London and business. The change had established his health, and he prepared for his journey with energy and spirit. Rattler drew him and his mother in the light cart to the station; and when Ellen Foster said farewell to her boy at the carriage window, she listened to whispered words which she never forgot: "Good-bye, mother. I mean to follow poor father's Bible rules; and if I do, I believe God will help me to be a rich man, and take care of you in your old age."

Tom Ford met Harry Foster at the Bishopsgate Station, little suspecting the hopes of his young friend. If ever a feeling of true friendship existed in the heart of a young man of twenty for a boy of fourteen, it

existed now in the loving anxiety of Tom Ford for the welfare of Henry Foster.

His love for the boy was shown in the improvements made in their sleeping apartment. Even to Harry, just come from the balmy air of Essex and the white-curtained bedroom of the old farm-house, the room looked clean and comfortable. A tempting-looking supper stood on the table in the parlour, and Mrs. Ford, in her best cap and Sunday gown, came forward to welcome him.

"I think you'll be comfortable with us, Master Harry," said Mrs. Ford. "I know it's all clean, and that's a great thing."

"Don't talk any more, mother, please," said Tom, who was learning from Harry to speak more correctly when with him. "Let's have supper; it's nearly nine o'clock, and I'm sure Harry's hungry. I've a got a holiday, you see. The governor's got a new 'prentice; he came yesterday; so he said I might go and meet you, and not come back. Lor! I can't tell how they'll manage to shut up shop. I think I'll go and see if it's all right arter supper."

Harry was glad to go to bed when Tom ran round to see about the shutters, and was soon fast asleep in his new iron bedstead and clean bedding, a present from Lady Fanshaw. Next day he began his duties in the City; but we, who know that Henry Foster had determined to find the Bible rules about business spoken of by his father, may feel sure that he did not rest till they were found. Before leaving his uncle,

Lady Fanshaw had given Harry, as a present, a copy of "Cruden's Concordance," and showed him how to use it, to his great delight.

Not a day had passed since then without searching for every text in which the word "business" occurred. Among the first was that text so often verified in the history of the world, Proverbs xxii. 29: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

This text Harry learnt by heart. Perhaps had he stopped his search there, he might have been like those who by "making haste to be rich, pierce themselves through with many sorrows."

But while the prospect of honour influenced the boy, he had been too well taught to take this alone as the business rule spoken of by his father. Day after day as he went to his office he took with him a new-found text, which he repeated over and over in his mind on his way.

And so the months and years passed by. Harry rose in his office. His month's holiday every year was spent at Rose Farm; and one autumn he obtained a fortnight's leave of absence for Tom from his uncle, that the homely but high-principled young man might spend that period with him at Rose Farm.

Poor Tom never forgot that happy time, but it proved a time of sorrow to the Fosters. During his shopman's absence his creditors made George Foster a bankrupt. His business and furniture were sold to pay his debts; and when Tom returned, he found a

new master, who was glad to secure his services at nearly double the amount of his former weekly wages.

Harry tried in vain to discover the whereabouts of his uncle and aunt and cousins. They had concealed themselves from the world, to his great distress.


"They will do better for themselves now, when thrown on their own resources, Harry," said Lady Fanshaw. "You will hear of them by-and-by."

"I'll go on working according to my Bible rules," said Harry to himself; "and when I've got enough and to spare, I'll find my father's brother somehow. He and his family shan't want money when I've got it."

How Harry succeeded will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT EXETER HALL.

HE Strand in front of Exeter Hall was a scene of bustle and excitement one fine evening in May. Numbers of persons from all directions were hastily passing up the steps to the large room of the building, which bid fair to be crowded to overflowing. The clocks pointed to ten minutes to six, when two carriages approached the Hall, which soon attracted the notice of passengers, and "There's the Lord Mayor's carriage" passed from one to another.

From the first carriage a tall gentleman, seemingly, about forty years of age, and a youth of fourteen, alighted, and assisted a lady and a little girl of twelve, from the carriage.

The gentleman, with the lady leaning on his arm, and followed by the young people, was conducted by a private way; the former proceeded to the platform, the latter to the seats in front, and presently the sound of applause from many hands greeted the Lord Mayor of London as he advanced to take the chair.

After a few words from some of the clergy and others who crowded the platform, the Lord Mayor rose, and after naming the object of the present meeting, the Secretary read the report, hurrying over here and there various statistics which he knew would not be appreciated by an audience more than three parts formed of young people from ten to twenty years of age.

After this, many resolutions were moved and seconded by talented speakers, more than one of whom possessed that particular talent which can make a serious or dry subject attractive to the young, and a chorus of youthful laughter and hand-clapping was frequently heard.

At last came the time for the chairman's speech. Many of the young people present had heard him before ; and as he rose, numerous little hands and feet were eagerly at work to welcome him.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began ; and then after a pause he added, "perhaps I ought also to say, young ladies and young gentlemen, for I can see that more than half my audience are young people who have been listening with earnest eyes and eager attention to stories of boys and girls who had never heard of the Bible till the Society on behalf of which we now meet placed it in their hands.

"I feel sure that all the young people before me are able to read that wonderful book ; but have they ever found out all the rules it contains ?

"Many, if not all among you, go to school, or are

taught at home ; and you well know what the rules are which the schoolmaster, the tutor, or the governess require you to follow.

"Where is the boy who does not remember doing penance for talking, or laughing, or otherwise disturbing the quiet and order of the schoolroom, by writing on his slate perhaps a hundred, five hundred, or even a thousand times, 'I made a noise,' or, 'I broke the rules'?"

A burst of laughter followed this reminder, and then his lordship went on again.

"I am not intimately acquainted with the scholastic rules or penances imposed on young ladies ; but I have heard that not many years ago the pupil who talked during school-hours had to stand on a form, with a ticket suspended by a ribbon round her neck. From her elevated position, she was to watch her schoolfellows closely, and on discovering a similar delinquent, could immediately change places with her."

This description also occasioned a shout of laughter, in which the boys' voices predominated.

"Well to be sure," continued his lordship, "it was rather funny, but I think I should have preferred this to what I have heard was the punishment awarded to young ladies, years ago, who did not hold up their heads, turn out their toes, or sit upright on a form without a back. The instruments of torture were a backboard, stocks, dumb-bells, and a board rising at one end about six inches from the ground ; to one or

all of which the offender was doomed, sometimes for even half an hour or longer. These relics of olden times, science and enlightenment have banished. Yet, my dear young friends, no school, no household, no family can be properly conducted unless certain rules are laid down and strictly followed. Nations, countries, cities are ruled by laws, the breaking of which subjects men, women, and even children to severe punishment. But these laws are made by man, although, in Christian countries, they have Bible laws for their foundation. The Bible, however, has not only rules for governing large communities, but also those which every man, woman, and child can make their guide in the most trifling actions of life.

“And now shall I tell you a true story?”

A burst of applause from the whole audience answered the attractive question.

The long May day was approaching twilight, and through the open windows the chirping of the sparrows sounded clearly in the silence which awaited the chairman's story.

“Nearly thirty years ago, my dear young friends,” he began, “a boy of thirteen stood by the bed of his sick father, listening to the last words from those dying lips. After many earnest precepts and loving advice, he told his boy that he would find in the Bible rules to guide his conduct, even in performing the duties of the business to which he was to be apprenticed.

“‘Oh, where, father?’ asked the boy; but the

approach of death had silenced those lips, and the answer never came.

“ ‘I must read a chapter every day till I find these texts,’ had been that boy’s resolve, to be broken, however, too soon. For the house in which he was placed was one in which idleness and waste ruled ; the Bible was never read, no family prayer nor thanksgiving ever rose to heaven, and the house of God was a place unknown.

“ But from utter ruin, during the six months of trial, before his indentures could be signed, the boy was saved by a fellow-worker in the business. Friends of his father found him out, friends who knew that without these Bible rules to guide him he could neither expect the approval of God nor His blessing which brings success. These friends snatched him from his perilous position, and one of them advised him to search again for the Bible rules in the book of Proverbs and the Epistles, promising to help him if he did not succeed.

“ Another situation was obtained for him, through the interest of his late father’s employer ; but the youth, who had firmly determined to do his duty in his new engagement, took the first rule about business, which he found in the Proverbs, as his chief guide : ‘ Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? he shall stand before kings ; he shall not stand before mean men.’ ‘ I will be that man,’ said the boy to himself ; but he had only one of the requisites in this text—

'Diligence;' he did not know then that there was another text that contained three.

"Temptation came in his way: an opportunity to increase his savings by fraud. He had nearly fallen, but the Sabbath-day intervened; and his fellow-workman, who was still his friend, and with whom he lodged, asked him to attend the morning service at Westminster Abbey. It was as usual a great pleasure to the boy to visit this beautiful building and hear the singing, and he hastily prepared to accompany his friend.

"But before long the boy's attention became fixed upon another subject besides beautiful singing. The two sat near the communion rails, and therefore the epistle of the day sounded in his ears clear and distinct as he followed the words with his eyes. It was taken from the 12th chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

"Presently, among the rules laid down by the great apostle, came the words, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'

"The sermon passed the youth by almost unnoticed. 'I'm not slothful in business,' he thought, 'but am I fervent in spirit? I am energetic and earnest enough in the spirit I throw into my business, but is my spirit fervent in "serving the Lord"?' "

"Conscience answered 'No.' The boy went home, and, kneeling by his bedside, prayed earnestly that, as well as being diligent in business, he might be also 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'

“My dear young friends, many of you are about to leave school and enter into business; will you not also pray that prayer? There are numerous other texts in the Bible, with rules for those who are engaged in any business or profession by which they hope to earn money; but there are none like the text which occurs in the verse of the 12th of Romans.

“Dear young people, I was that boy. I wanted to be rich, and ‘stand before kings,’ by my own diligence. But we cannot expect a blessing on our diligence, nor should I have had a right to expect that the promise to the diligent man would be fulfilled to me, had I not chosen as my chief rule, ‘Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’”

And then, amidst an uproar of applause, Sir Henry Foster, Lord Mayor of London, took his seat.

A vote of thanks to his lordship for presiding so efficiently was moved and seconded, and carried unanimously. A few amusing words in reply, which caused the laughter of young voices to mingle with the applause, and then the meeting broke up.

Round the supper table at the Mansion House that evening sat all of Harry Foster's old friends except Sir Thomas Fanshaw, his grandfather, and his uncle George, who had been removed by death.

Lady Foster,—the Lady Mayoress, once Ethel Fanshaw,—and her son and daughter; Tom, now Mr. Ford, master of the business in Orchard Street; and two ladies approaching the downhill of life, in whom

we recognise Lady Fanshaw, the youth's friend, and Ellen Foster, the happy mother of the Lord Mayor of London, are seated at the supper table. And here we will leave them to talk over the events of the evening, and say to each of our young readers, "Go thou and do likewise."



